

Exhibit 1

SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH DAJUAN MARTIN

I am employed at Bedi & Singer, LLP. As part of my duties, I interviewed Dajuan Martin about his family and social history. I spoke with Dajuan by phone on September 26, 2024, and October 3, 2024. The following is a summary of our conversations.

Dajuan and his three younger maternal half-sisters were raised in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago. While his sisters share the same father, they all consider themselves full siblings. Dajuan's mother and sisters have always been supportive of Dajuan. They continue to do so as he confronts the challenges of the instant charges.

Dajuan describes his childhood as "really toxic." Dajuan's biological father was rarely present during his life. However, Dajuan kept visiting his father until he was around six. When Dajuan was five or six years old, his paternal uncle touched him inappropriately on his buttocks on two separate occasions. These incidents occurred during a visit in Dajuan's father's home. Dajuan's paternal uncle was in his twenties. Dajuan has only told four people about these incidents: his mother, his wife, the Probation officer of his PSR, and his attorneys. Dajuan says, "This was super-traumatic, so I buried it." As Dajuan got older, he and his father reconnected. They talk monthly, and Dajuan says he and his father have a "pretty good" relationship.

Dajuan's mother married his stepfather, Andre Baker, when Dajuan was four or five. His stepfather was an alcoholic and drug addict who abused his mother. Although Dajuan was not abused by his stepfather, he was nonetheless affected by the brutality he witnessed. Dajuan remembers when he was seven years old, and his mother and stepfather began to argue particularly violently. His sister Robin was five, and Ariana was just a baby. Dajuan grabbed them both, and the three of them hid in a closet. He could hear "stuff being thrown around," "raised voices," and "tussling and things like that."

While Dajuan heard, rather than saw, most of the violence directed toward his mother, he does have a vivid recollection of another incident when he was about seven. Dajuan says, "I saw him push her real bad" and "I grabbed a hanger out of the closet" to defend her. There came a time when Dajuan and his sisters could anticipate his stepfather's erratic behavior. His sister, Robin, would say, "He's drinking that juice again." When that occurred, more often than not, violence would ensue. Dajuan was always on his guard when he anticipated his stepfather would erupt in rage. Eventually, his mother and stepfather separated. They divorced in 2000.

Once Dajuan's mother and stepfather separated, Dajuan's mother was not around much. She was working at an eye doctor's office and attending classes at Chicago State University to become a nurse. At first, his mother would take Dajuan and his sisters to school with her. There was daycare at Chicago State, and sometimes, if they behaved, they could sit in on her classes.

However, when Dajuan entered fifth grade, his mother decided he was “old enough” to stay home alone and care for his sisters. His mother gave him his first key, which he proudly wore around his neck as he embraced his new responsibilities. Dajuan recalls that it fell to him to care for his sisters. He walked his sisters to and from school, helped them with their homework, made sure they had clean clothes to wear, warm food to eat, and appropriate shoes for the weather. Mainly, he ensured they felt loved.

Once Dajuan’s stepfather was out of the picture, Dajuan craved a role model and paternal figure. He believed he found such a person at his church to seek advice from and in whom he could confide. Dajuan took this individual into his confidence and told him the secrets he did not feel comfortable telling his mother. Dajuan says he and this individual had what Dajuan refers to as “the sex talk.” When, as a sophomore, Dajuan developed a crush on a girl in his class, he disclosed his feelings to this individual. This girl is someone Dajuan refers to as his “first love,” and they began dating. When this girl became pregnant, Dajuan was heartbroken, again revealing the situation to the man he had been confiding in. Dajuan and this girl had never had sexual relations, so he realized she had been seeing someone else, who was the father of her unborn child. All along, Dajuan believed his secrets were safe. However, upon divulging this last piece of information, Dajuan discovered this man had been gossiping with his mother all along. All his secrets had been revealed, and Dajuan felt betrayed. Dajuan walked into the door of his home, and his mother “went nuts.” She began screaming and said, “[t]hat baby is probably yours.” Dajuan was heartbroken. First, because his mother knew all of the intimacies of his life, and second, because his mother believed this young woman was pregnant as a result of his actions. This experience stayed with Dajuan into adulthood and continues to define him as a lack of trust in others. He and his wife are in therapy so that he can learn to overcome the impact of having his trust violated.

Dajuan is a devoted husband and father whose family means the world to him. While his wife was pregnant, she was in and out of the hospital due to pregnancy complications. She was unable to work, and they struggled financially. When his wife was at home, Dajuan was the only one able to care for her and act as her nurse. They could not afford private nursing care. Because his wife was seriously ill, could not keep food down, and was rapidly losing weight, she had a PICC line inserted into her arm through which she received medication and liquid nutrition. Maintaining the PICC line and keeping his wife healthy was Dajuan’s responsibility. Their daughter, Dior, was born healthy on June 20, 2024, and her mother recovered from pregnancy complications.

Dajuan’s wife is a self-employed hairstylist and works most nights; thus, childcare responsibilities fall to Dajuan. This is a task that Dajuan happily accepts. Dajuan starts work at 5 am and picks Dior up from school at 4 pm. He says, “It’s literally me and her until we go to bed for the night.” Dior loves music, Disney movies, jumping up and down, singing and dancing.

Once a week, they have movie night, and Dajuan introduces her to a new movie, though if it were up to Dior, she would watch “The Emoji Movie” every night. He is also teaching her new words and her ABCs. One of Dior’s favorite things to do is go to Burger King for “Whopper Wednesday.” When Dajuan talks about his daughter, he says, with a smile in his voice, “[s]he’s my homie.”

When Dajuan thinks about this future, he says, “Once this case is behind me, mentally, I’ll be in a better place to focus.” He is spending time concentrating on his family and his work. Although Dajuan has been professionally employed since 2017. He is also a self-employed photographer. He believes taking pictures “has been the thing that’s keeping my mind together.” He takes pictures at his church a couple of times a month to “make people feel good about themselves.” Church has become a priority for him. For a time, Dajuan feels he lost his way, but his plans for the future include a renewed commitment to his church. His faith is now stronger than it has ever been.

The illicit activity that is the subject of these charges grew out of an appropriate and legal relationship between Dajuan, a customer service agent for Southwest Airlines at Midway Airport, and Ned Brooks, a Southwest Airlines customer, and his co-defendant in these charges. The two initially met when Brooks was introduced to Dajuan by a mutual friend. Brooks had been unable to secure a flight reservation for himself and his family to fly during a busy time of the year. This mutual friend suggested Brooks contact Dajuan for assistance with the requested Southwest Airlines flight. Brooks took this suggestion and contacted Dajuan for help. Dajuan was successful in reserving the desired tickets. Also, at the time, Dajuan had a discount voucher that Southwest Airlines had issued to Dajuan to use for himself, his family, or his friends. Because the voucher was expiring, Dajuan offered it to Brooks. Brooks accepted the discount voucher. Each aspect of this preliminary contact was legal and complied with appropriate policies and procedures.

During the flight that Dajuan had arranged, Brooks evidently had an issue with Southwest Airlines. Dajuan does not recall the specifics of the issue since he had nothing to do with its resolution. A different customer service agent took care of it. However, Dajuan believes that this other customer service agent issued a money voucher to Brooks to compensate him for whatever inconvenience he suffered. Brooks accepted the voucher issued by a different customer service agent. At some point later, Brooks approached Dajuan to see whether Dajuan had access to these money vouchers.

Dajuan stopped his dealings with Brooks and others because his own life was moving forward, and he wanted to take a different path. On June 20, 2022, Dajuan’s life inalterably changed when his daughter Dior was born.

Dajuan used the funds he received for these vouchers to care for his wife, who was in and out of the hospital due to complications from pregnancy, pay his bills, and pay for rent, food, diapers, and formula in anticipation of their daughter's birth. Dajuan is deeply ashamed and embarrassed by the facts and circumstances that bring him before this Court.

Dajuan promises, "This won't happen again because it won't happen in the life I will be living. My light will show this will not happen again. I fell astray. Where I am spiritually is different from where I was. God puts you in situations so you can get back to your faith." He says, "I am better for myself. Better for my daughter." Dajuan continues, "The scare of being away from my family and not being able to do what they need me to do makes me crazy." Dajuan considers his faith when he says, "It has changed me to know I need to depend on God for everything. No one else. The biggest thing I've learned is where I need to put my hope and my faith in Him." Dajuan concludes by saying, "I am remorseful about this whole thing. If I could go back, I would not do it again. The strain this has put on my family means I would never do this again. I deeply apologize." This is a summary of my conversation with Dajuan Martin.

Stephanie Hirschboeck